

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH'S INTERIM REPORT FOR 1948

The Registrar General's figure for the population of the town is 7,249; the figure for 1947 being 7,037 and for 1946, 6,984. The usual seasonal increase in the population commenced during June and lasted until the middle of September. With few exceptions hotels, boarding houses and apartments closed down for the winter. As will be seen later in this report conditions on the whole were good and the health of the town showed no marked variation from the normal.

Water Supply.

The water supply has been on the whole satisfactory. The main supply from Nutscale has been adequate for all demands made upon it up to the present time. The sources which supplied the town previous to the acquisition of the Nutscale water and which are still in use should be retained as they might be of the greatest value under certain circumstances. As to quality, the supply to the town of treated water from the main reservoir is satisfactory. Seventeen samples of raw water, that is untreated water, were taken during the year. Sixteen of these samples were regarded as being contaminated in various degree. Six samples of treated water were taken with satisfactory results. The chlorination of the raw water was varied until a satisfactory result was obtained.

A slight degree of plumbo-solvency detected in the Alcombe supply has not so far called for any action. In view of a contemplated change in supply of water to the Alcombe district it is doubtful whether any action will be called for. Correspondence with the Ministry on the subject is continuing.

All the dwelling houses in the town are supplied from public water mains direct to the houses.

Swimming Pool.

The water at the Swimming Pool has been tested periodically with highly satisfactory results.

Sewage Disposal.

The Sewage disposal has been as satisfactory as in the past. Extensions have been carried out at Periton for the new houses and flats in process of erection. Complaints are still received from users of the bathing beaches of their being fouled by sewerage matter. Methods for abating this nuisance are being considered.

Food.

No outbreaks of food poisoning have been reported during the year.

Meat and other Foods.

Meat is prepared for human food at the Minehead Abattoir, from where it is distributed throughout the districts of Minehead, Watchet, Williton and Pulverton. So far as is practical, all animals are inspected before slaughter and all carcasses and offal are inspected in accordance with instructions laid down in Memo/62/Foods, and appropriate action taken where required.

All places where food is prepared etc., including the Abattoir, shops, stalls and vehicles, are inspected from time to time and action taken as required. Generally, the cleanliness of these establishments and vehicles is satisfactory.

Carcases inspected and condemned.

	Cattle excluding cows.	Cows.	Calves.	Sheep and lambs. .	Pigs.
Number killed.	541	291	702	5,546	106
Number inspected.	541	291	702	5,546	106
<u>All diseases except Tuberculosis. Whole carcases condemned.</u>	5	9	8	32	2
Carcases in which some part or organ was condemned.	90	196	2	188	6
Percentage of the No. inspected affected with disease other than Tuberculosis.	17.56	70.45	1.42	3.97	7.55
<u>Tuberculosis only. Whole carcasses condemned.</u>	1	5	3	-	-
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned.	17	44	2	-	. 1
Percentage of the No. inspected affected with Tuberculosis.	3.33	16.84	.77	-	.94

Housing.

The total number of houses is 2,250. Twenty-eight houses were erected during the year; twenty-six by the Local Authority and two by private enterprise. Five flats were obtained by the conversion of existing buildings. Twenty-seven houses were in course of erection at the close of the year.

As to the housing requirements in the future, your Surveyor informs me that no estimate can be given without a survey of the existing housing conditions in the district. As to whether living conditions are unsatisfactory no reasonably correct statement can be made without the survey mentioned in the previous sentence.

Overcrowding.

As far as is known no statutory overcrowding exists.

Infectious Diseases.

Infectious Diseases occurring during the year were of the usual type and frequency. Two mild epidemics, measles and whooping cough, occurred.

Cases requiring institutional isolation are sent to Taunton Isolation Hospital.

Notifications and mortality from tuberculous diseases shows a change from last year when 32 cases were notified and there were 2 deaths. In the year under consideration 16 cases were notified and there were 6 deaths.

Cases of Tuberculosis are dealt with at the Tuberculosis Clinic.

Disinfection of premises after infectious diseases is carried out by the Local Authority, also after cases of unhygienic or unpleasant nature.

Disinfection after Scabies is undertaken by the Council. Cases of this disease which do not respond to domiciliary treatment are sent to a Centre for this purpose on the recommendation of the medical practitioner responsible.

Hospital.

In this connection the inception of the National Health Service took place in July of the year under consideration. This marked the end of the Voluntary Institution which, under the name of the Minehead & West Somerset Hospital, had met the requirements of the town and neighbourhood in surgery, medicine and obstetrics.

The Hospital now functions under the care of the Ministry of Health and certain alterations have been made in its accommodation, functions and management.

Local representation in the management of the Hospital still exists in the House Committee of the Hospital which is empowered to make representations to the Committee of Management of the group of Hospitals in which the Minehead Institution is included.

Many alterations and additions envisaged by the management of the Voluntary Organisation it was hoped would be carried out under State administration. It is too early at present to gather any accurate information as to how far the necessary improvements and replacements will be dealt with.

I have to mention a further change in the Hospital administration, namely, the resignation of the Matron, Miss Gray, after 14 years of service. Her retirement was greatly regretted by all connected with the Hospital and the many patients who passed through the Hospital during her term of office. A great part of her service was during the War years and the subsequent transition period. Demands made on her health and energy by those difficult times had much to do with her retirement.

The new Matron, Miss Genge, has taken over her new command and it is hoped that her régime will be as successful as her predecessor's.

I am able to report that this Institution is emerging from the transition period without at present any loss of efficiency.

Ambulance Services.

During the early part of the year the transport of the sick and injured was carried out by the St. John Ambulance Brigade to the entire satisfaction of the community. In July the transport came under the direction of the Ministry of Health. Recognising the efficiency of the voluntary services arrangements were made whereby the voluntary services of the St. John Ambulance Brigade were retained while the cost of the running and maintenance of the ambulances was provided for under the National Health Service Act, the voluntary services still being maintained by financial support from the general public.

Clinics.

Clinics for Infant Welfare and Ante-Natal treatment are maintained in the town under the direction of Dr. H.M. Chappel.

Tuberculosis and Venereal Disease Clinics are held in the town and are under the control of and maintained by the County Council.

The Tuberculosis Allowances Scheme is also under the control of the County Council through the Tuberculosis Officer and the Health Visitor.

Premature infants are in the care of the District Nursing Association.

I have pleasure in taking this opportunity of acknowledging the courtesy and help of the Clerk of the Council and the other Officers with whom I come in contact.

W. BAIN

M.B., B.S., Lond.

September 1949.